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Allen Dulles of the CIA

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As America's master spy in the 1950's Allen Welsh Dulles was looked upon by the leaders of both Moscow and Peking as the arch enemy of communism. Dulles, who has died at 75, was indeed the captain of this country's nonmilitary team for cold war operations. But he did not consider himself to be the enemy of the Russians, the Chinese or any other political order. For almost a decade as director of the Central Intelligence Agency his mission was simply to learn as much as he could about the strengths and the weaknesses, the capabilities and the intentions of all potential enemies of the United States.

In his 1963 book entitled "The Craft of Intelligence," Dulles explained why the United States requires an extensive -- and costly--intelligence system in time of peace:

"We are faced with a closed, conspiratorial, police-dominated society. We cannot hope to maintain our position securely if this opponent is confident that he can surprise us by attacking the free world at the time and place of his choosing and without any forewarning."

Yet Dulles recognized that Americans tend to

feel uncomfortable about their government's taking part in what has been called the "dirty business" of spying. He pointed out that morality has nothing to do with the estimated 20 per cent of all intelligence activities which, perforce, are conducted in undercover fashion. It is a matter of self-defense and national survival, with the country having no realistic choice except to make use of espionage.

For the most part, however, Dulles was more a scientist than a top secret agent in the cloak-and-dagger tradition. He presided over a new scientific era in intelligence collecting, in which spying space satellites and computers became standard equipment. It was an almost totally different set of techniques than those employed by Dulles as a principal U. S. intelligence operative based in Switzerland during the two World wars.

Genial and quite communicative for a man of his calling, Allen Dulles was a brilliant professional in the shadowy field of intelligence. Lesser known to the public than his brother, John Foster Dulles, secretary of state in the Eisenhower administration, he was judged generally effective in his CIA directorship despite the controversy of the U-2 and Bay of Pigs episodes in which he was involved. A public servant of the first rank, Allen Dulles was essentially an old-fashioned patriot who did his best in the present for the preservation of his country's tomorrow.